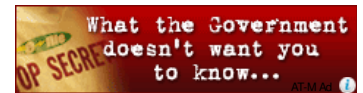


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NATION NOW

Kansas, Arizona win proof-of-citizenship requirement in voting suit

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Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, the architect of the state's proof-of-citizenship law for new voters. (John Hanna / Associated Press / August 1, 2013)

By Michael Muskal
March 19, 2014 | 2:28 p.m.

A federal judge has ruled that Kansas and Arizona should be allowed to require voters to provide evidence of U.S. citizenship, in a case closely watched by both sides dealing with the question of voter eligibility.

U.S. District Judge Eric Melgren in Wichita, Kan., ruled that the U.S. Election Assistance Commission had no legal authority to deny requests from the two states to add the citizenship requirement. In the ruling, released Wednesday, he ordered the commission to revise the national form immediately.

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Kansas and Arizona require new voters to provide a birth certificate, passport or other documentation to prove U.S. citizenship. The federal registration form, however, requires only that prospective voters sign a statement declaring they are citizens. The different requirements opened the possibility that residents of those states would have to register twice, using separate voter registration forms, if they wanted to vote in both state and federal elections.

The fight also has political overtones. Republicans have generally argued in favor of tougher voting requirements, contending they prevent fraud. Democrats oppose the state standards, which they say can block their voters — including the young and the poor — from registering to vote.

The top election officials, Kris Kobach of Kansas and Ken Bennett of Arizona, had sued to force the federal agency to include proof of citizenship. Both are considered conservative Republicans.

“This is a huge victory for the states of Kansas and Arizona,” Kobach said in a prepared statement emailed to reporters. “They have successfully protected our sovereign right to set and enforce the qualifications for registering to vote. We have now paved the way for all 50 states to protect their voter rolls and ensure that only U.S. citizens can vote.”

“Today’s decision is an important victory for the people of Arizona against the Obama administration, assuring that only Arizona residents and not illegals vote in Arizona elections,” Arizona Atty. Gen. Tom Horne said in a statement.

Election Assistance Commission spokesman Bryan Whitener said in an email that the ruling is “under review.”

The ruling can be appealed to the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Denver.

Melgren ruled that the U.S. Constitution gives states the power to set voter qualifications, and Congress has not preempted it. The case arose after the U.S. Supreme Court last year struck down part of Arizona’s 2004 proof-of-citizenship law. The Kansas voter ID law took effect last year.

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Von Dicator Rank o

28 BLUE states just turned RED!



The Rifleman Rank o

If DEM activists believe that this kind of requirement really does inhibit eligible voters from going to the polls, then there is only ONE really effective strategy. Lawsuits trying to block this sort of the thing are not the answer. The answer is for DEM activists to become very proactive in helping the elderly, the poor, the minorities, and non-English speaking citizens to get proper ID, get registered to vote, and get to the polls on election day. Fight fire with fire. If these are the rules... » more



old_one Rank o

Finally. States right upheld. A surprise requirement, citizenship to vote. Too bad it takes states right to be upheld for something that should be a federal mandate!



mtermann Rank o

Why is it that the LAT is opposed to voter ID laws yet says nothing about the DONE's practice requiring voters in the Neighborhood Council elections to not only provide ID but show the poll worker exactly the location of their residence on a map of the community the NC represents? Yet if I take out my DL at a real election, the poll worker immediately asks me to put it away.



Gholston Rank o

I honestly still have a hard time wrapping my head around why this issue even goes as far to be in front of a federal judge. What is the difficulty in showing an ID card to prove who you are to vote? In my opinion, it says a lot about how far our country has slid that even becomes an issue.



Gholston Rank o

@Gholston EDIT : has slid that *this has even become an issue...

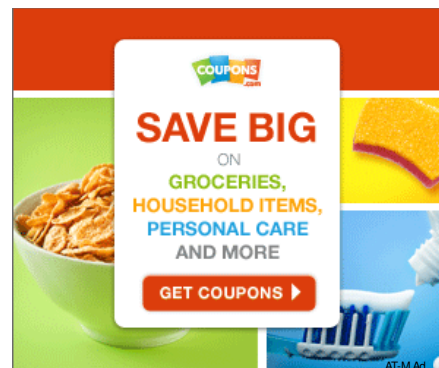
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29PalmsSailor Rank o

Dang... so much for that plan of voting not only once, but often! Just kidding, but I'm sure the democrats are crying in their foreign beer tonight.

viatoura





Wild Pointer Rank 0

Democrat voters are the dead, illegals, and fraudulent voters. It is the only way they can win; Cheating at the vote.



o Rank 0

Every state should require this!



FrontSight Rank 0

This is a win for America.



glhall Rank 0

I don't see a problem with it. Prove you're a citizen and then you vote.



FrontSight Rank 0

@glhall

I agree. Proving you are a citizen should be a requirement to vote in government elections. Anyone who is a citizen should have no problem obtaining the documentation. If they lost it or something now is a good time to start fixing that...

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